

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY EDUCATION OFFICE

Review Report

AUDIT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Fiscal Year 2019-20 and Fiscal Year 2020-21



MALIA M. COHEN
California State Controller

June 2023



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California State Controller

June 21, 2023

Dr. Susan Salcido, County Superintendent of Schools
Santa Barbara County
4400 Cathedral Oaks Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93160

Dear Dr. Salcido:

The State Controller's Office reviewed the Santa Barbara County Education Office's (CEO) audit resolution process for local education agency exceptions noted in the annual audit reports. The review covered fiscal year (FY) 2019-20 and FY 2020-21.

Our review found that the Santa Barbara CEO followed its audit resolution process for FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21. As a result, the Santa Barbara CEO was in compliance with Education Code section 41020.

If you have any questions, please contact Joel James, Chief, Financial Audits Bureau, by telephone at (916) 323-1573.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

KIMBERLY TARVIN, CPA
Chief, Division of Audits

KT/ac

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Review Report

Summary

The State Controller's Office (SCO) reviewed the Santa Barbara County Education Office's (CEO) audit resolution process for local education agency (LEA) exceptions noted in the annual audit reports for fiscal year (FY) 2019-20 and FY 2020-21. Our review found that the Santa Barbara CEO followed its audit resolution process for FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21.

Background

Education Code section 41020(n) requires the SCO to annually select a sample of county superintendents of schools for which the SCO will perform a follow-up review of the audit resolution process. Results of these reviews will be reported to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) and the county superintendents of the schools that were reviewed.

In addition, Education Code section 41020(n) states that the SCO shall require auditors to categorize audit exceptions in the audit report in such a manner that both the county superintendent of schools and the SSPI can discern the exceptions for which it is their responsibility to ensure that the LEAs take action to correct.

The Santa Barbara CEO provides coordination of educational programs and professional and financial supervision for 20 LEAs under its jurisdiction. In addition, the county superintendent of schools maintains special schools and programs countywide, independent of the LEAs.

County superintendents of schools are required to do the following:

- Review, for each of their school districts, audit exceptions relating to attendance, inventory of equipment, internal control, and any miscellaneous items, and determine whether the findings have been corrected or an acceptable plan of correction has been developed (Education Code section 41020[i][1]);
- Review audit exceptions related to the use of program funds for instructional materials, teacher misassignments, and school accountability report cards. The county superintendents must also determine whether the exceptions have been corrected or an acceptable plan of correction has been developed (Education Code section 41020[i][2]);
- Review audit exceptions related to attendance, inventory of equipment, internal control, and other miscellaneous exceptions. Attendance exceptions or issues must include those related to local control funding formula allocations pursuant to Education Code section 42238.02, as implemented by section 42238.03, and independent study (Education Code section 41020[j][1]);
- Notify the LEA, and request that the governing board of the LEA provide to the county superintendent of schools a description of the correction or plan of correction by March 15 (April 15, 2022, for

FY 2020-21 audit reports) of the subsequent year (Education Code section 41020[j][2]);

- Review the description of the correction or plan of correction and determine its adequacy and, if the LEA's response was not adequate, require the LEA to resubmit that portion of its response that is inadequate (Education Code section 41020[j][3]);
- By July 15 (June 15, 2022, for FY 2020-21 audit reports) of the subsequent year, certify to the SSPI and the SCO that the county has reviewed all applicable exceptions, and state that all exceptions have been corrected, or that an acceptable plan of correction has been submitted by the LEA to the county superintendent, except as noted in the certification. In addition, identify by LEA any attendance-related exceptions or exceptions involving state funds, and require the LEA to submit the appropriate reporting forms to the SSPI for processing (Education Code sections 41020.9[b] and 41020.9[c]);
- Review LEAs' unresolved prior-year audit exceptions when the California Department of Education defers to the county (Education Code section 41020[l]); and
- Adjust subsequent local property tax requirements to correct audit exceptions relating to LEA tax rates and tax revenues (Education Code section 41020[o]).

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of our review was limited to determining whether the Santa Barbara CEO followed its audit resolution process for resolving LEA audit exceptions in a manner consistent with Education Code section 41020. Our review did not include an evaluation of the sufficiency of the action taken by the LEA and the Santa Barbara CEO to address each exception, nor did it assess the degree to which each exception was addressed.

The review period was FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21.

To achieve our objective, we performed the following procedures:

- We verified that the Santa Barbara CEO addressed all attendance, inventory of equipment, internal control, and miscellaneous exceptions. In addition, we verified that the Santa Barbara CEO addressed any findings on program funds for instructional materials, teacher misassignments, and school accountability report cards. However, with respect to exceptions based on sample items, our review did not include a determination of whether the exception results were properly quantified and addressed at a districtwide or countywide level.
- We verified that the Santa Barbara CEO notified LEAs that they must submit completed corrective action forms to the Santa Barbara CEO by March 15, 2021, and April 15, 2022, for FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21, respectively. Our review did not include an assessment of the LEAs' progress in taking corrective action.

- We verified that the Santa Barbara CEO required the LEAs to submit the appropriate reporting forms to the SSPI for any attendance-related exceptions that affected state funding.
- We reviewed the letters of certification due on July 15, 2021, and June 15, 2022, that the Santa Barbara CEO sent to the SSPI and the SCO regarding any resolved and unresolved audit exceptions.
- We verified that the Santa Barbara CEO followed up with unresolved prior-year audit exceptions that the SSPI had required the Santa Barbara CEO to conduct.
- We verified that the Santa Barbara CEO adjusted subsequent local property tax requirements to correct audit exceptions related to LEA tax rates and tax revenues.

Our review was conducted under the authority of Education Code section 41020(n).

Conclusion

Our review found that the Santa Barbara CEO followed its audit resolution process for FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21. As a result, the Santa Barbara CEO was in compliance with Education Code section 41020 for FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21. We made no additional determination regarding Santa Barbara CEO's audit resolution process beyond the scope of the review outlined above.

Views of Responsible Officials

We discussed our review results with the Santa Barbara CEO's representatives during an exit conference conducted on December 29, 2022. At the exit conference, the Santa Barbara CEO's representatives agreed with our review results.

Restricted Use

This review report is intended solely for the information and use of the Santa Barbara CEO, the California Department of Education, the California Department of Finance, and the SCO; it is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties. This restriction is not meant to limit distribution of this review report, which is a matter of public record and is available on the SCO website at www.sco.ca.gov.

Original signed by

KIMBERLY TARVIN, CPA
Chief, Division of Audits

June 21, 2023

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